

State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster

Budget Communications Memo



Rural Initiative

Background

The state superintendent's budget will support rural Wisconsin by assisting our rural schools, libraries, and communities as they struggle with declining enrollment, rapidly rising property values, and revenue caps. This budget proposal includes a "sparsity" aid proposal of \$26 million for small, rural districts, assistance for declining enrollment districts, and expanded transportation aid to further assist all districts.

Budget Request

	FY 08	FY 09
Transportation Aid	\$0	\$0

There are two components to this request:

- Increase the reimbursement rate for pupils transported over 12 miles from \$180 to \$220 per pupil for both years of the 2007-09 biennium. No additional GPR funds are needed; the base appropriation is projected to be sufficient.
- Request statutory language similar to that in 2005 Assembly Bill 726 which allows schools to claim refunds of the motor vehicle fuel tax.

Sparsity Aid for Small/Rural Districts	\$0	\$26,462,400
--	-----	--------------

Create a new statewide program for small, rural districts that meet certain criteria and provide them with additional funding to be used for locally-determined purposes. Criteria: Under 2,000 students; less than 15 students per square mile; minimum free and reduced lunch (FRL) of 20%. \$300/student for districts above 40% FRL, \$150/student between 20-40% FRL.

Declining Enrollment Revenue Limit Exemptions	\$0	\$0
---	-----	-----

The department proposes further assisting declining enrollment districts by: (1) Providing that all districts receive at least their prior year's base revenue limit, even if their enrollment decline along with their inflationary adjustment and low-revenue ceiling increase (if applicable) are less than their base; and (2) Increasing the current 75 percent declining enrollment provision to a full, hold harmless provision on a non-recurring basis.

Investing in our Future